(NY269189) without success *F. lugubris* is common in woodlands in the Duddon valley, right up to Seathwaite. Walking down the valley from Seathwaite on 19 September I saw numerous nests of *F. lugubris* in a great variety of situations, from sunny exposed slopes to damp shady woodlands, and found *Formicoxenus* males on one nest near Tongue Wood (NY225963) (VC69). At Wallowbarrow (NY219964) (VC70) I also found males on one nest, and a slightly larger individual which proved to be a worker. This confirms the presence of *Formicoxenus* in nests of *Formica lugubris* in both vice-counties of Cumbria.

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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

Recent British records of *Gymnosoma nitens* Meigen (Diptera: Tachinidae) and some comments on its status in Britain—On 18.vi.1998 I swept a small yellow-bodied fly around the derelict yard of Woodlands Farm near Bexley (TQ446765, vice-county 16, West Kent). Although immediately recognizable as one of the globose tachinids (Phasiini) which parasitize heteropteran bugs, it wasn't until autumn that I got around to confirming its identity. Using the key by Belshaw (1993), it easily worked to a male of *Gymnosoma nitens*, a red data book 1 species.

Examining the Bexley specimen I thought it looked familiar and located two further specimens, both males, in my collection. They were collected by sweeping near White Downs, Surrey, 15.viii.1977, along with a third specimen, a female, now in the collection of my father, A. W. Jones. At the time they had been misidentified using the key by van Emden (1954) as the similar-sized *Cistogaster globosa* (Fab.) the key did not include *G. nitens*. Two specimens were exhibited under this incorrect name at the 1977 BENHS annual exhibition (Jones, 1978).

The single record for *G. nitens* listed by Belshaw (1993)—Happy Valley, near Boxhill, Surrey, 1956—has since been added to. Plant (1996) and Plant & Smith (1996) reported two specimens from Grays, South Essex and one from Sandwich, Kent. In addition, the fly has turned up on other Essex sites on the north bank of the Thames Estuary (C. W. Plant, personal communication) and Clemons (1999) reports finding it in 1985 and 1996 in Kent.

In a recent paper, Morris (1997) reviewed the status of *Gymnosoma rotundatum* (L.), and reported that it too had recently become more widely and more often recorded. It started to appear more regularly in the 1950s, and during the 1970s, 80s and 90s has increased tremendously. Morris suggested the increase may be linked to the recent spate of hot dry summers. He did not give any further climatic information; the data he reported were collated by decade and it would be difficult to match precise yearly weather to this scheme. But his suggestion seems entirely feasible.

The recent increase in *Gymnosoma nitens* might well be linked to the same weather factors, indeed, it is probably easier to link this species' increased occurrence to the climate. The recorded years of its capture, 1956, 1977, 1985, 1996, 1997 and 1998 were not necessarily just hot dry years in southern England, but perhaps more importantly they all *followed* very hot and dry years and subsequent mild winters. Our knowledge of the fly's life history is vague and patchy and it is based on only a handful of breeding records from the Continent. Nevertheless, these climatic elements fit what little we do know. It seems clear that hot dry summers ought to favour the host shieldbug, *Sciocoris cursitans* (Fab.), which judging from its ground-dwelling habits, its preferred chalky and sandy habitats and its southern and coastal distribution, is a warmth-loving species. Because *Gymnosoma* overwinters as a larva in its host bug, mild winters ought to occasion low mortality.

Incidentally, according to Kirby (1992) the North Downs near Box Hill are a stronghold for the nationally scarce (notable) *Sciocoris*, so it is not surprising that the fly was first found here. The only specimen of this bug that I have ever come across was on the sandhills at Deal, very close to Sandwich where Plant & Smith (1996) recorded *G. nitens*. Although I did not find *Sciocoris* at Woodlands Farm, I did find the closely related *Podops inuncta* (Fab.), another secretive ground-dwelling shieldbug.—RICHARD A. JONES, 135 Friern Road, East Dulwich, London SE22 0AZ.

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***Nysius senecionis* (Schilling) (Hemiptera: Lygaeidae) in Norfolk**—Jones (1997, *Br. J. Ent. Nat. Hist.*, **10**: 2) urged the submission of notes on the expansion of this bug's range in Britain. Single specimens were found at two sites during the 1997 programme of biological survey: Brancaster Marsh (TF782451), one swept from sea wormwood *Artemisia maritima* L. and sea aster *Aster tripolium* L. at the dune-saltmarsh fringe, 2.ix.1997; and Little Eye, Salthouse Marshes (TG078443), one beneath a mat of sea campion *Silene maritima* With. over sand and pebbles, 8.ix.1997. I would like to thank Peter Kirby for confirming my identification.—KEITH N. A. ALEXANDER, Biological Survey Team, The National Trust, 33 Sheep Street, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1RQ.